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## ABSTRACT

Recently at the 16th World Sanskrit Conference, 28th June -2nd July 2015, Bangkok, Thailand I gained some exposure to current practices in translation of Scriptures, and I feel that the words, from Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, compiled below, on the translations of Indian Scriptures, written more than six decades ago still stand correct. This compilation is aimed to be a *reminder*.

# On Translation of Scriptures

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Recently at the 16th World Sanskrit Conference, 28th June -2nd July 2015, Bangkok I gained some exposure to current practices in translation of Scriptures, and I feel that the words, from Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, compiled below, on the translations of Indian Scriptures, written more than six decades ago still stand correct. This compilation is aimed to be a *reminder*.

"Existing translations of Vedic texts, however etymologically "accurate" are too often unintelligible or unconvincing, sometimes admittedly unintelligible to the translator himself. Neither the Sacred Books of the East nor for example such translations of the Upanishads as those by R.E.Hume or those of Mitra, Roer, and Cowell, recently reprinted, even approach the standards set by such works as Thomas Taylor's version of the Enneads of Plotinus, or Friedlander's of Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed."

"Translators of the Vedas do not seem to have possessed any previous knowledge of metaphysics, but rather to have gained their first and only notion of ontology from Sanskrit sources."

"As remarked by Jung,(Psychological Types, p.263,) with reference to the study of Upanishads under existing conditions, " any true perception of the quite extraordinary depth of those ideas and their amazing psychological accuracy is still but remote possibility."

"It is very evident that for an understanding of the Veda, a knowledge of Sanskrit, however profound, is insufficient. Indians themselves do not rely upon their knowledge of Sanskrit here, but insist upon the absolute necessity of study at the feet of a guru.

That is not possible in the same sense to students in the West. Yet they also possess a tradition founded in the first principles.

*p.viii*

"What right have Sanskritists to confine their labors to the solution of linguistic problems; is it fear that precludes their wrestling with the ideology of the texts they undertake?" Our scholarship is too little humane...(over to foot note 3, p 77)"

"On the one hand, the professional scholar, who has direct access to the sources, function in isolation; on the other, the amateur propagandist of Indian thought disseminates mistaken notions. Between the two, no provision is made for the educated man of good will."

“In any case, no great extension of our present measure of understanding can be expected from philological research alone, however valuable such methods of research may have been in the past, and what is true for Sumero-Babylonian religion is no less true for the Vedas, viz., that “further progress in the interpretation of the difficult cycle of... liturgies cannot be made until the cult is more profoundly interpreted from the point of view of the history of religion.” [(4) Langdon, S. Tammuz and Ishtar, Oxford, 1914, p.v]

*References:*

Coomaraswamy Ananda K. : *A New Approach to the Vedas: An Essay in Translation and Exegesis*. ISBN 81-215-0630-1 (1994) originally published by Luzac & Co. London. [Introduction, p. vii]